

RELIGION AND SOCIAL POLICY

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ment, made it out of the question for it to contemplate, even if it had been disposed to do so, the rigorous economic discipline desired by the divines. Tradition, a natural conservatism, the apprehension of public disorder caused by enclosures or by distress among the industrial population, a belief in its own mission as the guardian of "good order" in trade, not unmingled with a hope that the control of economic affairs might be made to yield agreeable financial pickings, gave it a natural bias to a policy which aimed at drawing all the threads of economic life into the hands of a paternal monarchy.

In the form which the system assumed under Elizabeth, considerations of public policy, which appealed to the State, were hardly distinguishable from considerations of social morality, which appealed to the Church. As a result of the Reformation the relations previously existing between the Church and the State had been almost exactly reversed. In the Middle Ages the former had been, at least in theory, the ultimate authority on questions of public and private morality, while the latter was the police-officer which enforced its decrees. In the sixteenth century, the Church became the ecclesiastical department of the State, and religion was used to lend a moral sanction

to secular
social policy. But the religious revolution
had not
destroyed the conception of a single society,
of which
Church and State were different aspects ;
and, when
the canon law became " the King's
ecclesiastical law
of England/" the jurisdiction of both
inevitably tended
to merge. Absorbing the ecclesiastical
authority into
itself, the Crown had its own reasons of
political
expediency for endeavouring to maintain
traditional
standards of social conduct, as an antidote
for what
Cecil called " the license grown by liberty
of the
Gospel." Ecclesiastics, in their turn, were
public
officers—under Elizabeth the bishop was
normally also
a justice of the peace—and relied on secular
machinery'